

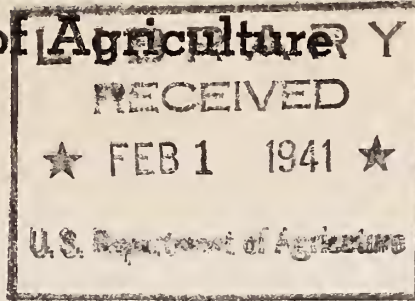
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United States Department of Agriculture



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WASHINGTON, D. C.

## THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

## ----- FATS AND OILS FOR COOKING -----

Many times every day, the cook reaches for the kitchen fat supply. In fact, families in this country spend from 8 to 18 percent of their food money on fats and oils -- a considerable investment from the standpoint of the family budget.

"In cooking, the chief uses of fat are for flavoring, for frying, and for shortening," points out Elizabeth Fuller Whiteman of the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture. "And, though some fats serve more than one of these purposes, no single fat is equally suitable for all uses."

Facts to help the homemaker when she buys and uses fats and oils are given in the new Leaflet 204 -- "Fats and Oils For Cooking and Table Use." A free copy may be obtained from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Following are some common questions about these products answered in this publication.

### BUYING FATS

Q. About how many different kinds of fats and oils are available on the market?

A. Those in common use are butter, oleomargarine, lard, hydrogenated fats, compounds, and cottonseed, olive, soybean, corn, and peanut oils. Thrifty cooks also often buy suet and salt pork, render them at home, and use them to give special flavors to fried foods.

Q. What are hydrogenated fats and compounds?

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A. These fats include many of the well-known brands of household cooking fats on the market today. A "hydrogenated" fat usually is made from an oil -- or a mixture of oils that has been treated with hydrogen to change it from the liquid oil to a plastic, semi-solid form. A "compound" is a mixture of fats, of oils, or of both. Compounds, hydrogenated fats, and lards all look pretty much alike.

Q. What facts can you learn from reading a label on fats and oils?

A. First of all, you can learn how much you are buying and thus compare the economy of different sized packages. Also you can find a list of ingredients that tells what the fat or oils is made of.

If it's an animal fat that has been prepared under Federal Meat Inspection, there appears on the container the mark of the Federal Meat Inspection Service, "U. S. Inspected and Passed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture." This stamp means that the fat, when inspected, was found to be good wholesome food and that no false or misleading information was on the label. It means, too, that the true name of a fat will appear on the label. Such a true name might be "pure lard," "rendered pork fat," "pure lard, beef fat added," "refined and hydrogenated lard," or maybe "compound, composed of vegetable and animal fats."

Still other labels may give facts about the way the fat has been manufactured, which sometimes are clues to its quality. Or it may have on it a grade name that describes its quality.

Some of the butter you will find on the retail market is Government-graded. Graded butter often has on it a certificate of quality that gives its score and the date of grading. Highest scoring butter is U. S. 93, which has a "fine" flavor. Next is U. S. 92, with a "pleasing" flavor. Both are firm, and light or medium in color and in amount of salt.





According to law, butter must be made only from milk or cream, with or without added salt and color, and have in it not less than 80 percent, by weight, of milk fat.

#### COOKING WITH FATS

Q. What is the best kind of fat to use for frying croquettes, doughnuts, and other foods in deep fat?

A. A number of fats are good for deep-fat frying. First, you want a fat with a bland flavor. But more important, it must be a fat with a high "smoking point." That is, the fat must be able to stand high temperatures without beginning to smoke.

When fat begins to smoke, it starts to break down chemically. During this break-down, the fat gives off an odor that irritates the nose and the throat. Food fried in it will not only taste unpleasant, but may actually be irritating to the digestive tract. Also, fat if saved to be used again, will turn rancid much more quickly once it has been heated to the smoking point.

Good fats for deep-fat frying are vegetable oils except olive oil, the hydrogenated fats, some of the compounds, and high-quality lards.

Q. What fats are suitable for shallow or pan frying?

A. All those suited to deep-fat frying mentioned above. And, in addition, butter, oleomargarine, olive oil, and drippings may be used. Never heat any fats until they smoke, if you possibly can avoid it.

Q. What fats make the best shortening?

A. For cakes, biscuits, and other quickbreads, almost any fat or oil with a bland flavor will work. For cakes, you may want a fat that creams easily, such as butter, oleomargarine, and many of the hydrogenated fats.

There are a number of fats on the market that make good, flaky pastry. But as to the best one to use, every cook is still her own best judge. For the short-





ening value not only varies among the different fats, but it also depends upon how the pastry is mixed. Oils make good, tender piecrust, too -- but a crust that is mealy, rather than flaky.

#### SUBSTITUTING FAT FOR FAT

Q. Can fats be substituted for one another, measure for measure?

A. Not usually. The amount of actual fat in a cupful is not the same for all fats. Follow these handy rules in making substitutions.

If the recipe calls for lard and you want to use butter or oleomargarine instead, add an extra 2 tablespoons of butter or oleomargarine for each cup of fat called for in the recipe.

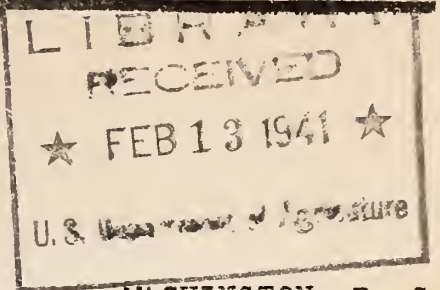
Substituting the other way round -- use seven-eighths of a cup of lard (1 cup less two tablespoons) of lard for every cupful of butter or oleomargarine called for in the recipe.

If the recipe calls for lard, and you are substituting a hydrogenated fat for it, add an extra 1-1/2 tablespoons for every cup of lard called for in the recipe.



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WASHINGTON, D. C.

## THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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## CHANGING FOOD HABITS

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Great Grandpa probably never tasted a tomato salad -- a stringless green bean -- or a grapefruit. Great Grandpa never knew the indecision that comes from assembling a meal from a cafeteria counter. Great Grandpa never saw a chain grocery store. And to him vitamins, protective foods, or fresh spinach in December were unheard of.

These are but a few of the developments that have brought changes in our food habits since Great Grandpa's day. What some of these changes have been and how they have affected our diets is pointed out by Dr. Louise Stanley, chief of the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

"Both for better and for worse," says Doctor Stanley, "the food habits of the people of this country have changed markedly in the past few generations."

Today, we eat fewer natural and more processed and fabricated foods than we did before. Today we have a far greater variety of foods available. Tastes have changed. And there is much less difference than before in the foods eaten in different parts of the country -- or from season to season.

"From the nutritional standpoint," said Doctor Stanley, "one of the most encouraging trends over the past 50 years, is the sharp increase in the amount of milk, tomatoes, citrus fruits, and leafy green vegetables that we eat."

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These are all included on the "protective" list of foods. That is, they are foods noted for mineral elements and vitamins in which diets are likely to fall short.

On the debit side of the nutritional ledger, Doctor Stanley places some of our developed food preferences.

"A modern standard of fastidiousness," she says, "has led many of us to use the lean-muscle cuts of meat to the neglect of the organs of animals. An association of goodness with richness in fat has led us to overlook the values of skim milk. Though skim milk lacks the fat in whole milk it is as rich in protein and in much-needed calcium.

"Some food-processing practices, such as a high degree of milling of wheat, refining of cane sugar, and bleaching of vegetables have stripped natural products of certain nutritive qualities. Because we have come to associate whiteness with goodness, we often eat these foods to the exclusion of others."

As a result, unwise food choices tend to offset the benefits of the increased use of protective foods. And diets as they stand today often are short in calcium, and in vitamins A, B<sub>1</sub>, and C.

"Obviously," points out Doctor Stanley, "many of the nation's food habits could well be reshaped with an eye to nutritional improvement."

Sometimes, Doctor Stanley believes, food habits can be reshaped on a national scale. A current instance of this may be the public adoption of the new "enriched" flour, which mills plan to put on the market soon. This flour will be enriched with vitamins and other food values in which American diets are low.

Generally, however, food habits are reshaped on the individual or family basis.

"Any person who is working to reshape his own food habits," says Doctor Stanley, "owes it to himself to change for the better. He needs to check





carefully to see how his regular diet measures up to the standards for good nutrition."

Here's what a normal adult should have every day according to a check list recently published by the Bureau of Home Economics:

MILK--1 pint or more. LEAFY, GREEN, OR YELLOW VEGETABLES--1 or more servings. TOMATOES, ORANGES, GRAPEFRUIT...OR ANY OTHER VITAMIN-C RICH RAW FRUIT OR VEGETABLE--1 or more servings. POTATOES, OTHER VEGETABLES, OR FRUIT--2 or more servings. EGGS--1, if possible. LEAN MEAT, POULTRY, FISH--1 or more servings. CEREALS AND BREAD--at least 2 servings of whole-grain products. FATS AND SWEETS--as needed to satisfy the appetite. WATER--6 glasses or more.

As far as changing family food habits--"the hand that sets the table" is the hand that wields the influence.

The important part the homemaker plays in improving family diets was illustrated over and over again in a recent nation-wide survey of what this country eats. In this study, conducted by the Bureau of Home Economics, well over one third of the nation's families were estimated to be living on diets below the "safety line" for good nutrition.

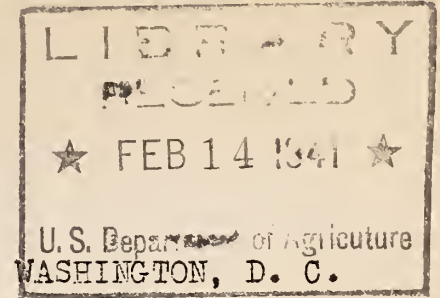
"A closeup of these diets," says Doctor Stanley, "showed that thousands of them could have been brought up well above the safety line at very little additional cost. In many cases, this could have been done simply by using more milk in its less expensive forms, and by including more of the cheaper leafy and green-colored vegetables. Likewise, economical choices can be made in practically all of the important food groups. It is up to the homemaker interested in her family's health to find out what these choices are. For only by keeping up-to-date on food values and nutrition--by good management--and by good-cooking--can she provide the very best diet the food budget allows."





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### THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture

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### CHERRIES

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Since Parson Weems wrote his "Life of Washington" -- there has been a close association between cherries and Washington's birthday. And -- though the story of the chopped down cherry tree may be discredited -- there's still no better way to observe the day than by serving a tempting cherry dessert.

Cherry dishes, of course, are by no means limited to February 22 -- any more than they are to the fresh cherry season. For annually a major portion of the crop is "put up" for use any time of the year. With the 1940 crop a near-record, there are plenty of cherries available right now in canned or frozen form.

In fact, the 1940 pack of red "pie" cherries is the highest that's ever been on record. These are the cherries that are used chiefly in cooking.

As far as the homemaker is concerned, frozen cherries are fairly new. Even yet, frozen cherries in family-sized containers are not generally available on the market. They are put up mostly in very large drums or barrels and are used by hotels, restaurants, and bakeries. The greatest share of frozen cherries are of the tart pie varieties.

The cherry is one of the four canned fruits for which standards have been set up under the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. Since April, 1940, all canned cherries sold in interstate commerce have had to meet certain specifications. If they do not, they must be labeled clearly as below standard.





According to federal regulation, cherries must meet three different standards. One is for identity -- one is for quality -- and the other is for fill of container.

The standard of identity makes it compulsory for the label to tell what kind of cherries are in a can. They may be "red tart" or "red sour," which mean the same thing. Or they may be "dark sweet" or "light sweet." Also, the label must show whether the cherries are pitted or unpitted.

According to the standard of fill of container -- the can must contain all the cherries the canner can get in and seal properly. If it does not, it must be labeled "Below Standard in Fill."

Among other things -- the "reasonable standard of quality" set for cherries names the highest number of pits that may be in a can of standard cherries marked as "pitted." In the case of unpitted cherries, it sets a lower limit on the size of the cherries. Still other sections of the standard say what the general condition of the cherries in the can should be. Cherries that do not come up to these specifications must be labeled as "below standard in quality."

Not to be confused with the new Food and Drug Administration standards are the United States quality grades for cherries that may be marked on the label. According to the grading system of the Agricultural Marketing Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, better quality cherries get higher grades. U. S. Grade A red pitted cherries, for instance rate higher on all quality counts than do those in the next lower grade U. S. Grade C.

When cherries are marked with the initials U. S. before the grade name, this means that government inspectors were on duty all the time the cherries were being canned and labeled. Canners may grade their own cherries and mark them with the federal grade names if the cherries come up to the Government specifications for



those grades. However, they may not use the initials U. S. unless the cherries are canned under government supervision.

In cooking with cherries, the first thing to check up on is sweetness. Both canned and frozen cherries are put up with varying amounts of sugar added. Since most recipes are made on the basis of unsweetened cherries, they may need to be modified.

Favorite role of the sour cherry is in pie -- the crust generously filled and the filling neither too juicy nor too stiff. The same filling used in pie can also be used in cherry tarts, which make a perfect party dessert because they are so easy to serve. An easy way to make tart shells is to bake piecrust dough over the back of custard cups or individual muffin tins.

To insure a crisp under crust in cherry pies, partly bake the crust first, then pour in the slightly thickened filling and bake in a hot (425° F.) oven for 20 to 30 minutes longer.

Restaurants and bakeries have found that cherry pie is a year-round best seller. The method used by the U. S. Department of Agriculture cafeteria to prepare frozen cherries for pie is to "plump" the cherries up first. First the cooks let the cherries thaw out at room temperature. Then they drain off the juice, sweeten it, thicken it slightly, and cook for a short time. They add a bit of salt and butter and pour this hot mixture over the thawed-out cherries. Next morning the cherries are plump and glossy and ready to go into the pie.

Like any fruit that can be cooked, there are hundreds of ways to use cherries. They may be baked in dumplings made with biscuit or pastry dough. They may be deep-fat fried in fritters. They may be put in puddings of all sorts -- tapioca, betty, bread, or steamed. Use them in mousse made in the refrigerator or in ice creams with a custard base. Cherry sauce makes something special out of plain blanc mange, plain ice cream, shortcake, or plain cakes.





Because cherries both taste good and look colorful they are excellent in an upside-down-cake. The following recipe has been tested in the kitchens of the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

#### CHERRY UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

First make up a cherry mixture according to the following method. Drain the juice from 1 No. 2 can (2-1/2 cups) of red sour cherries. To 1/4 cup of the cherry juice, add 1 cup sugar and 1/4 cup water. Boil until the mixture spins a thread. Add the drained cherries and boil rapidly until this mixture spins a thread. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a heavy 9-inch frying pan. Pour in the candied cherries and allow the mixture to cool. Then add the following cake batter.

Cream 1/4 cup butter or other fat. Add 1/2 cup sugar and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Stir until the mixture is light and fluffy. Add 1 well-beaten egg. Sift together 1-1/2 cups sifted soft-wheat flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Add this alternately with 1/2 cup milk to the first mixture. Stir to mix well and pour over the cherries. Bake in a moderate oven for about 45 minutes. Loosen the sides of the cake, turn it out carefully upside down. If the fruit sticks to the pan, lift it out and place it on the cake. Serve with whipped cream.

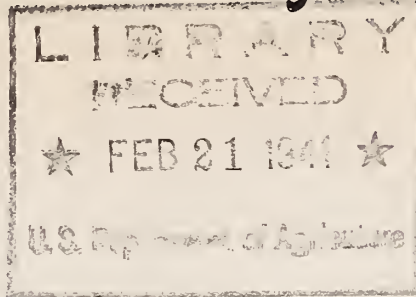
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WASHINGTON, D. C.

### THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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### THE WHITE POTATO

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"Plenty of them" is the market story in brief for potatoes right now. New spuds and old spuds are adding up to many, may spuds. New ones from the 1940 crop, largest since 1934, are plentiful and their quality good. There are ample supplies of potatoes for the "one serving a day," regardless of whether the food budget is liberal or limited, as recommended by the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The difference in food value between the old and the new potatoes is not large enough to influence the homemaker's choice, as far as is now known. Flavor difference may be and price difference could be. New potatoes grown in the South and shipped long distances naturally cost more at this time of year. In general, new potatoes contain a little more water and a trifle less carbohydrate and mineral salts.

High food value in relation to cost, plus inherent good flavor suggest excellent reason for eating potatoes frequently, whether old or new. Potatoes deserve extra attention in the late winter and early spring because of their vitamin C content.

Many of the fruits and vegetables frequently listed for their vitamin C value are not available or cost too much during this in-between season. Recent scientific



tests on vitamin C, or ascorbic acid, of potatoes, a year-round food, are most encouraging. Indications are that the potato offers much of the vitamin, even after storage and no matter how cooked.

Because vitamin C is easily destroyed, however, there is some loss in the cooking. To keep the greatest amount of the vitamin, cook the potatoes in their jackets. Such cooking will also save the most vitamin B<sub>1</sub>, another important food value of the vegetable. If the potatoes are pared and boiled, water left after the cooking should be used for soup or gravy.

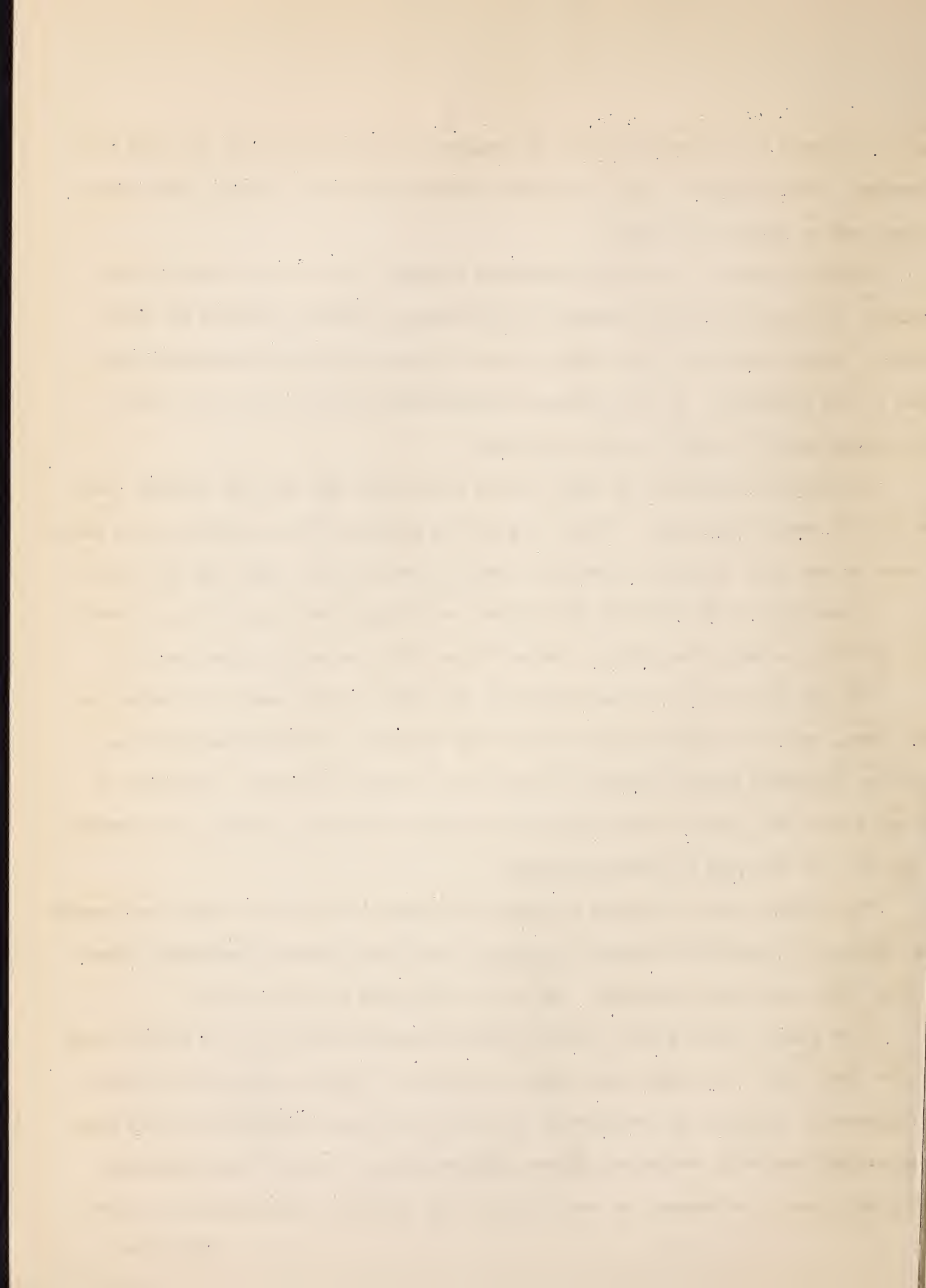
Cutting pared potatoes in small pieces before boiling may save cooking time, but it will waste food value. If you do pare the potatoes before cooking, cook them as soon as you can. Otherwise they will lose food value while they soak in water.

A good bit of the minerals of potatoes, mostly phosphorus and iron, is very near the skin, so make the parings then or better still serve the skins and all.

"To get that mealy, dry perfection in the baked potato, start the baking in a hot oven, and let it bake at about 400 to 425 degrees F. until thoroughly done," says Mrs. Elizabeth Fuller Whiteman of the Bureau of Home Economics. "Whether or not you grease the potato before baking is a matter of personal choice, but remember if you do, the skin may be soft and greasy.

"To prevent lumps in mashed potatoes, the bane of the novice cook's existence," Mrs. Whiteman's scientific cooking tips go on, "cook the potatoes thoroughly first of all. Then mash them thoroughly, and be sure the milk you add is hot.

"For crisp, tender French fries, rinse the potato slices in cold water, drain and dry them. Fry them right away, about a cupful at a time, in deep fat of about 375 degrees F. Soaking the potatoes in water for two hours before frying will make them crisper, but will lessen the flavor and food value. Use the bland flavored, high grade peanut, cottonseed or corn oils for the frying. The potatoes will have





better flavor and more sheen. The same ideas are good for shoestring potatoes, made from thin strips of the potato instead of the wedges used for French frying.

"Crisp-cruste'd, hashed brown potatoes are tops in flavor, and answer a 'left-over' problem as well. There is a trick in getting the crisp brown crust. Add a little hot water to the melted fat before you add the seasoned potatoes, about a quarter cup of water for four cups diced potatoes."

Real success in cooking potatoes depends on buying the right potatoes for the use you will make of them. Mealy ones are good for baking or mashing, and waxy ones for salads and creaming. Knowing the variety of potato is an important help in getting the type you want, but varieties vary widely according to where they are grown. Idaho grown Russet Burbanks and Maine grown Green Mountains, for instance, are known the country over for their baking quality, but Russet Burbanks and Green Mountains grown in other localities may not measure up to the same standard. Growers in the different localities, however, may produce another variety that is good for baking. Locally grown potatoes are usually cheaper. Many of the new potatoes on the market now are Bliss Triumphs. These are a waxy potato, good for boiling. Old Bliss Triumphs are also on the market.

Regardless of the variety, choose clean, uniform-sized potatoes that are free from cuts, decayed spots and with only a few shallow eyes. Don't buy sunburned potatoes, for the greenish flesh, which indicates the burn, will be bitter. If you buy many potatoes at a time, keep them where it is cool, dark, moist and well ventilated. "Cool" means about 60 degrees F. The darkness is important for the sunburn may come from any light, not only from direct sunshine.

